# LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. Palme Dutt

## World Trade Conference

MAURICE DOBB

## Atomic Strategy and The Admiralty

Commander E. P. YOUNG, R.N. (Retired)

June, 1952

One shilling and sixpence

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# PICTURE OF MEN AT WORK

WHEN a Californian subscriber declared recently that he and his friends thought *Labour Monthly* the 'salt of the earth', I thought of those hundreds of readers responsible for the facts described in our Editorial Board's Progress Report (Page 275). This report, describing the results of achievements in circulation-raising, could not have been made without the enthusiasm of active men and women at work in the British labour movement. These three letters illustrate what I mean.

## THE BOROUGH COUNCILLOR

First comes a letter from a reader who has proved himself the individual champion exponent of the Free Specimen Scheme to date. His score amounts to 22 prospective readers introduced to *L.M.* in the past months.

*London, April 7, 1952.*

'May I explain why I desire to spread the circulation of *L.M.* far and wide? For many years I have read our worthy periodical and endeavoured to get my friends to do the same, but very few seemed to persevere. Hence I took the opportunity to enlighten my colleagues on the local Borough Council by forwarding their names to you for specimen copies. I am a manager of several Primary schools. Meeting all kinds of persons at these quarterly gatherings impels me to endeavour to re-educate a few. The seed occasionally falls upon fertile soil.'—*Labour Party Councillor.*

## THE YOUNG BRANCH SECRETARY

Secondly comes a letter from a country market town. I especially want to emphasize that; for if such can be done there, what immense possibilities exist in the great industrial areas! The writer is 23; he has been a reader for about a third of his life.

*Sussex, April 15, 1952.*

'Our sale this month reached 21, the highest ever; and 19 are likely to be regular readers. This rise in price to 1s. 6d. certainly was a blow. Several workers stopped buying because of that; yet there seems to be such an increase in the will to read on the part of the more advanced workers. The readers I have gained and kept since I first wrote to you include: an A.E.S.D. member; a U.P.W. and Labour Party active worker; another L.P. comrade who always attends Tory meetings to ask questions; a prospective L.P. council candidate; a close supporter of the L.P. in a small village council estate; a veteran; a young U.P.W. member; an A.E.U. member; an ex-hunger marcher; and two young workers. Our literature secretary has made a N.A.T.K.E. reader, a N.U.P.E. (ex-district committee) L.P. member—and has begun to read it himself. This is to reassure you that the specimen copies are doing a very good job.'—*Communist Party Branch Secretary.*

## THE ENGINEERING SHOP STEWARDS

Back to London for a glimpse into a big engineering factory; where a group of readers, not content with reading L.M. themselves and selling it to their workmates, have taken a further step.

*Continued inside back cover*

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## Notes of the Month

# *Rising of the Storm*

**It seems almost as if the nations of the West have been for decades blindly enacting parts in a drama that could have been written by Lenin.**

**This pattern of events, which points so surely to ultimate disaster, can be changed if only the peoples of the West have the wisdom to make a complete break with many things of the past and show a willingness to do something new and challenging.**

**General EISENHOWER, Report on Europe to Atlantic Council, April 1, 1952.**

June, 1952, sees the anniversary of two wars in which this country is engaged. It is the fourth anniversary of the Malayan War—the most barbarous colonial war which Britain has ever waged. It is the second anniversary of the Korean War—that turning point in the aggressive expansionist policy of the Atlantic Powers. Both are wars of invasion and devastation of other peoples' countries. Both are wars conducted thousands of miles away from the homelands of the bandit Powers sending out their conscript expeditionary forces or hired head-hunters and weapons



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of destruction to spread havoc and death among peoples who only ask to be left alone. Both are thus wars remote from any pretence of national defence, or, in other words, typical imperialist wars. Both are wars meeting with the stubborn, heroic and prolonged resistance of the small nations invaded, and arousing the mounting anger and indignation of the peoples of Asia, of all colonial and semi-colonial peoples, and increasingly of civilised opinion even in the imperialist countries. Both are wars conducted, as the normal military methods fail to achieve their aim, with ever more open defiance of international law and all rules of war and resort to methods of barbarism and new criminal weapons of horror. Imperialism is indeed—in General Eisenhower's words, whose import he has not understood—'blindly enacting parts in a drama that could have been written by Lenin' on the road to 'ultimate disaster'. Catastrophe for the peoples can indeed only be averted 'if the peoples of the West have the wisdom to make a complete break with many things of the past', i.e. with the war policies of imperialism and the Atlantic Pact, and 'show a willingness to do something new and challenging', i.e. to challenge the suicidal policy of their rulers and enter on the path of peace.

**Accusing Questions**

How long must these wars go on? Why must an impoverished Britain go short, increase its deficits, worsen its standards, and cut down on the vital needs of its people, in order to indulge in the luxury of these costly and shameful wars of aggression against peoples across the globe who have never threatened Britain? Why must British children be deprived of school meals in order to kill Korean children? Why must British young couples be denied homes in order to destroy the homes of Malayan villagers? Where will this dance of death lead? These questions are beginning to shake opinion, as the controversy over the arms programme rises, as its mounting costs strike every household, and as the spectre of slump and unemployment advances over the horizon.

**Opening Eyes**

New currents are stirring. It is becoming obvious to the most heedless that these local wars are only a beginning of what is being prepared, if the full American programme for a rearmed Japan as a satellite to resume aggression in Eastern Asia, and a rearmed Western Germany as a satellite for aggression in Eastern



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Europe, together with the gigantic rearmament programmes in Western Europe, goes through. It is becoming more and more widely realised that the arms programme is not for defence, but for aggression:

> I want to say definitely and without hesitation that Russia is not the aggressor. The aggressor is the United States.
>
> (J. B. Figgins, General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, speech at Sheffield, May 4, 1952).

It is becoming more and more widely realised that the American programme only holds out the prospect of destruction and ruin for Western Europe:

> The main reason why a good part of the world does not love us is a double fear that we will bring about World War III and economic disaster. (*New York Times* Sunday Editor, Lester Markel Smith, speech at the Times Auditorium, *New York Times*, April 11, 1952).

**Rising Storm**

Therefore the storm of popular protest and national resistance is rising in Britain and other countries against the American war policy and the satellite governments which are yoked to it. In France even the conservative *Monde* publishes the alleged Fechteler War Plan which writes off Western Europe as doomed to destruction and assumes the atomic annihilation of Britain in order to justify a policy of ousting British and French control in Northern Africa and the Middle East. The puppet Adenauer's position grows increasingly shaky, as the demand rises in all parts of Germany for unity and peace, and the Western Powers are thrown into panic confusion before the proposal for a united and peaceful Germany, and even shrink from the suggestion of elections in Western Germany, lest these imperil the rushing through of their unpopular war plans. In Japan the country-wide strikes and May Day demonstrations of millions, conducted in the face of violent police repression, and openly demanding the end of American military occupation and domination, have demonstrated the movement of the people for national independence, democracy and peace. In Britain the electorate at the local elections has voted against Toryism with a degree of a swing and a turnover of seats never before equalled within six months of a general election installing a government in power. At the same time within the labour movement, already visibly representing a majority of the electorate, the tide rises against the leaders committed to the rearmament programme, as conference after conference of major



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unions goes on record for a change in policy, for a reduction of armaments, for Four Power negotiations on Germany, for the ending of the wars in Malaya and Korea, and for a Five Power Peace Pact (i.e. not for 'Bevanism', as the press has incorrectly reported, but for a left policy).

**Summer of Decision**

All these questions come to a head in the months now opening. These months will see the most crucial decisions for peace or war in Eastern Asia, either for a cease-fire in Korea as the essential preliminary to a general settlement, or for the launching of the plans, openly proclaimed in influential American quarters, for extended war in Eastern Asia. These months will equally see no less crucial decisions for the future of Germany, and therefore of war or peace in Europe, either for a Four Power agreement for a united, democratic and peaceful Germany, or for the Western plan of a permanently partitioned Germany under military occupation and a satellite rearmed Western Germany tied to the Atlantic war machine as the spearhead of the future war offensive. At the same time these months will see the development of the battle of policy within the labour movement in Britain, as the approach advances to the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference, which will have to take decisions of far-reaching significance for the future. All these questions here involved are still in the balance. Their outcome will determine the course of events far ahead.

**Frenzied War Plans**

There is no room for illusions that the menace of war has receded, as Mr. Churchill, Mr. Eden and other Western statesmen have recently declared in their public speeches in the hope to allay the rising popular alarm. Mr. Eden claimed in his broadcast on April 5 that the advance of Western rearmament had diminished the danger of war. On the contrary. It is only necessary to consult the Nuremburg War Criminals' trial to see how precisely this argument of Nazism—the 'situation of strength' or 'peace through strength' theory propounded by Nazi propaganda—was mercilessly exposed and torn to pieces by the Allied prosecution and revealed as the cover for aggression. It was the Nazi war criminals, Goering, Schacht, and Ribbentrop, who never tired of repeating that German rearmament was only 'to provide the strength to make her voice heard



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in the family of nations' and 'to give us weight in negotiating'. It was the American prosecutor, Jackson, who exposed this as a subterfuge by which the aggressor sought to shift responsibility on to the countries which refused to let themselves be intimidated and offered resistance to aggression; just as it was the same American prosecutor, Jackson, who showed how the preparation of a war of aggression was camouflaged 'in the name of a united Europe'. If the menace of general war has still been held at bay, if the swelling contradictions have hampered the plans of the war camp, and if there are new hopes and possibilities for peace, it is only because of the rising strength of the peace movement of the peoples, with the active role of Soviet peace diplomacy in the first place. But this very situation is only making more desperate and reckless the measures now employed by those driving for war, alike in relation to Germany and Europe, and in Eastern Asia.

**Eastern Asia**

It is in Korea, Malaya, Vietnam, in Eastern Asia, that the actual present main wars of aggression of the Western powers are being waged, just like the first stage of the offensive of the Axis. Therefore it is these wars that must be ended, before they spread to general war. And it is precisely in these wars that the most critical moment of decision has been reached. Four years have passed since Britain launched its war in Malaya by suppressing all democratic and working class organisations and driving the leaders of the Malayan people into the jungle. Two years have passed since the cabal of Dulles, Johnson, MacArthur and Bradley in Tokio in June, 1950, took the fateful decision to launch the war in Korea in order to begin the new offensive, after the fiasco of their intervention in China, and to provide the pretext for the seizure of Formosa. Both these wars, no less than the French war in Vietnam, have reached military deadlock in face of the resistance of the people. As Admiral Joy, in charge of the Western powers' representation for the truce negotiations, had to admit to the press: 'The Allies had lost the military advantage and must negotiate from a position of stalemate' (*Manchester Guardian,* March 1, 1952). Similarly in Malaya what was initially described as a 'police action' against 'bandits' (re-translated from the original Japanese) has long had to be recognised as a full-scale war; all the commanding military and police officers have been successively replaced; and every report



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has been gloomier than its predecessor on the strength of resistance of the people. In Vietnam the bankruptcy of imperialist aggression is even more manifest. Hence the choice has become inescapable. Either to make peace. Or to resort to new, more violent, intensified and extended war in Eastern Asia. It is to the latter alternative that the trend of Western policy has up to the present been turned. General Templer's methods in Malaya, large-scale napalm bombing and germ warfare in Korea—these have been the alternatives of the Western powers to peace.

**Lovers Of Humanity**

For one year the truce negotiations in Korea have been blocked and sabotaged by the American authorities, whose leading spokesmen, like Kimball and Dulles, have openly called for extension of the war. The latest Ridgway ultimatum has sought to break off the negotiations on the ground of insistence to retain 100,000 prisoners of war, and to return only 70,000. It is admitted that this demand is illegal. It is admitted that the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union signed a solemn convention at Geneva in 1949 accepting the unconditional obligation to return all prisoners of war on the cessation of hostilities, and explicitly laying down (Article 7) that ' prisoners-of-war may in no circumstances renounce in part or in whole ' this right to repatriation—thus guarding against hypocritical pretexts about prisoners' alleged ' wishes ' by the authorities holding them under duress. But what is law or a signature to the imperialists?

> The answer must be found . . . not in law . . . but in humanity . . . Whatever the law may seem to say, it is repugnant to liberal and Christian sentiments. (*The Times*, May 8, 1952).

How humane they are!

**' Liberal and Christian Sentiment '**

Unfortunately for these high-minded sentiments, immediately after the official announcement that all but seventy thousand prisoners, following the most 'humane screening', had declared for remaining with the beloved Syngman Rhee and the Americans, the next official announcement brought news of an outbreak against 'violent screening' in one prisoner-of-war camp on Koje Island, already notorious as the scene of bloody massacres of prisoners by American soldiers and camp guards, where it was stated coolly that eighty thousand 'diehard' (ominous word) prisoners-of-war were stationed, who were described as 'indoctrinated Communists' resisting all attempts to make them



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declare for Syngman Rhee and the Americans. When the United States Commander of the camp, General Colson, signed an undertaking to refrain from further 'violent screening', and observe in future the Geneva Convention, he was dismissed by the American High Command for signing such an undertaking.

**'Humane Screening'**

As for the 'humane screening', the sworn statements of captured American parachuted agents who had operated in the camps described the methods employed, e.g. the statement of Liu Cheng Han, captured on February 25, who had been 'educational director' in the Koje Island camp.

> Prisoners were called out one after another to answer 'yes' or 'no' in front of guards chosen for their 'toughness', who acted as torturers and carried wooden rods, bayonets and other instruments of torture. . . . The special agents compelled the captured personnel to declare they did not want to return to their own homeland and made them sign a petition. (*New China News Agency Bulletin*, May 8, 1952).

The customary methods of 'persuasion' of the Syngman Rhee police had already been described by *The Times* special correspondent in Korea on October 25, 1950, as 'rather dreadful';

> Interrogation is a neat word like liquidation. In this case it meant beatings with rifle butts and bamboo sticks, and the insertion of splinters under finger nails.

However, it would be 'repugnant to liberal and Christian sentiment' to release prisoners from these tortures.

**Mr. Eden's Humanity**

It is worth noting that, according to the American press, the 'humane' and 'impartial' process of 'screening' 170,000 prisoners was conducted in one fortnight through agents of Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-Shek:

> On April 4 the talks were recessed so that the prisoners could be polled . . . On April 19 the U.N. informed the Communists that only 70,000 prisoners wished to be repatriated . . . A study of the scant news reports available indicates that the interrogations of prisoners upon which the U.N. figures were based were conducted by pro-Rhee Koreans and Chinese brought from Formosa by the U.S., and that few American officers competent to check the results were available . . .
>
> In a description of the Koje Island compounds *Time* magazine of January 28 reported: 'One difficulty is language . . . Only one officer on Colonel Fitzgerald's staff—a Korean-American captain—can speak Korean or Chinese . . . '
>
> Three months later, however, the U.N. command was able to complete within a fortnight what it described as an objective survey of the will of 170,000 prisoners. (*New York Daily Compass*, May 4, 1952.)



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Faced with these facts, Mr. Eden in the House of Commons on May 12 blandly declared that he 'was satisfied that the census recently taken by the U.N. command was exhaustive and fair'. Mr. Eden's humanity is easily satisfied, as with cynical indifference he brushes aside the fate of 170,000 prisoners and the future of war or peace in the Far East, without even attempting to inquire into the facts. His 'satisfaction' might appear less creditable before a future War Crimes Tribunal. It was on the same day that Mr. Eden defended napalm bombing on the grounds that he 'did not think the solution would be found by the placing of one weapon in a particular category of horror'—the familiar militarist argument of the lawfulness of all weapons in war, an argument which would equally justify germ warfare.

**'All Weapons'**

It was at the end of 1950 that President Truman said that the use of 'all weapons' in Korea was being considered. At the time this was widely interpreted in terms of the atom bomb, although military opinion recognised this weapon of mass civilian destruction in major industrial areas to be of doubtful strategic value for use in Korea. But the meaning of President Truman's remark (as well as his previous action in 1946 in repudiating President Roosevelt's pledge and preventing the ratification of the Geneva ban on bacteriological warfare by the United States) was made clear when at the beginning of 1952 the first offensive of 'biological warfare', i.e. the use of germs and chemical means to spread disease, was launched on an extending scale in Korea by the American Military Command. This was a date not less significant in the advance of modern barbarism than Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

**Theory of 'Frightfulness'**

The pretended horrror at the suggestion that the fastidious American militarists could ever think of using such weapons ('no one in the West believes for a moment that the Americans have ever considered using so vile a method of warfare', *The Times*, March 20, 1952—a plain, demonstrable untruth in the face of official American declarations) was rendered fantastic by the long series of boasts of American military authorities of their primacy in the development of this form of warfare and praising its efficacy and value. All official American strategic theory has upheld the familiar Nazi and militarist thesis that 'moral distinctions between



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weapons are meaningless' (Theodore Rosebury, American government expert on bacteriological warfare), since 'all war is inhuman' (so also the official American reply, obediently repeated by Mr. Eden in parliament, to the Archbishop of York on napalm bombing).

**'Ideal' Weapons**

Similarly the lame denials of the indisputable facts (combined with refusal of the Chinese and Korean proposal for an impartial international commission of scientists and doctors of world repute) have been equally exploded beforehand by the official declarations of the American military chemical authorities that such denials, and suggestions of 'natural causes' for the resultant epidemics, would be part of the routine procedure following the use of germ weapons:

> *Methods of biological warfare afford ideal sabotage weapons, because* they can be applied unobserved. Thanks . . . to the difficulties of observing them, it is not easy to prove. . . . In other words, one can create the impression that the deaths and disease have resulted from natural causes.
>
> (General A. K. McAuliffe, head of U.S. Chemical Corps, speech at Louisville in 1950).

The recipe of 1950 has been faithfully executed in 1952. For the conception of 'ideal' weapons it is worth comparing the declaration of General Waitt, Commander of the Army Chemical Corps, who boasted that the United States was 'ahead in germ warfare' and possessed in botulism

> the most poisonous thing known to man. One ounce could under ideal conditions kill 150 million persons.

*'Under ideal conditions'.* This must be what the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury mean when they complain that they find the Marxist materialists lacking in 'ideals'. We have certainly never envisaged 'ideal conditions' to 'kill 150 million persons', nor do we find such weapons 'ideal'. The struggle between the Atlantic War Lords and humanity is ever more manifestly becoming a struggle between barbarism and civilisation.

**'Methods of Barbarism'**

Half a century ago, at the beginning of the imperialist era, when the British militarists first invented the institution of concentration camps in the South African War, the then Liberal Leader of the Opposition and future Prime Minister, Campbell Bannerman, to his honour drew upon himself the reviling of the jingo press



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because he described these practices as 'methods of barbarism'. Has Mr. Attlee ever uttered a squeak of protest against the decapitations and brandishing of severed heads in Malaya? Or the use of 264 Dyak head-hunters? Or the collective fines on villages (one of the specific charges of the Nuremburg indictment of war crimes)? Or napalm bombing? Or the spraying of poison on food crops? But then Campbell Bannerman was still a Liberal (an extinct species today, as the *News Chronicle* and *Manchester Guardian* daily bear witness). Mr. Attlee is only a Labour Imperialist—to whom all things are lawful in the sacred cause of imperialism. But the revelations of General Templer's methods against the Malayan people's freedom struggle have aroused and will further arouse a storm of anger and protest from all organisation of the labour movement and from all civilised people. The fight to end the Malayan war on the basis of full withdrawal of all invading troops and unconditional recognition of the independence of the Malayan people is the sacred duty of the British working class and of the entire British people.

**Secret Military Commitments**

In these wars of imperialist aggression in Eastern Asia there is no third alternative between peace and extending war. The resistance of the peoples of Asia fighting for their freedom will never be broken. As the successively more violent, more reckless and intensified military measures of the invading Powers fail, so the cry goes up from their military chiefs and war-frenzied rulers for still more ruthless measures, for more inhuman weapons, for further extension of the war. The demand is openly sounded by the United States Secretary of the Navy, Kimball, and by the leading Republican authority on foreign policy, Dulles, to extend the war to the entire East Asian Continent. Britain is tied to each new madness of the United States rulers in the Far East by the secret military engagements accepted first by the Attlee Government and then enlarged by the Churchill Government. To score a debating point against a parliamentary vote of censure, Churchill divulged the existence of those secret military commitments initiated under the Labour Government, and threw the unhappy Morrison into confusion. Thereafter silence followed. The *Manchester Guardian* expressed the alarm of modern 'liberalism' at the danger—not of the secret military commitments—but of the British people getting to know beforehand of the secret



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military commitments (shades of 1914!) by which they might at a moment's notice be flung into major war:

> Let us hope that the heat of this debate does not lead to needless disclosures of details of international agreements especially where they deal with possible military action against future developments.
>
> (February 27, 1952).

Note well, sheep for the slaughter! In the opinion of the august *Manchester Guardian,* it is best to go into the slaughterhouse with blindfolded eyes.

**Germany—Western Powers' Dilemma**

Equally in relation to Germany, the war plans of the Western Powers are being pressed forward with all the greater fury as resistance rises. The Soviet proposals for a four-power meeting to establish a united, independent and peaceful Germany threw the Western powers into a panic flurry of confusion, as draft after draft of a projected reply was drawn up and flung aside. The dilemma was expressed by the *Wall Street Journal* on March 26:

> The alternative to a re-united Germany is partition forever. . . . We should then face the prospect of forever occupying Berlin and probably Western Germany. The armies of East and West would have to sit forever facing each other over a conquered people who see one side promising them their country back, and the other side—ourselves—intransigent in keeping it divided. Under such circumstances, which way would German sympathies be likely to be pulled?

These considerations led to the initial United States tentative proposals, subsequently withdrawn, and the halfway proposals of the Labour Party Executive statement of April 30 for a possible four-power meeting to agree on elections for an all-German Government.

**Fear of a United, Peaceful Germany**

Yet the Western authorities fear equally that an independent, united Germany would mean an end of their plans to use a puppet Adenauer remilitarised régime as the spearhead of their anti-Soviet war front. The *Economist* of March 22 openly expressed its fear of all-German free elections:

> At the best, all-German free elections at the moment would give a parliament as divided as the French Assembly. At the worst, they would start a slide into 'popular democracy' and alliance, overt or covert, with the Soviet.

The Labour M.P., Crossman, on a visit to Western Germany, found the official view of the Western occupying authorities



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privately outspoken in hostility to a united Germany as a menace to the Atlantic war preparations (*New Statesman and Nation*, May 3):

> 'May not the Russian proposals be genuine? Should we not at least test them?' I asked one British official. 'But you don't understand,' he said. 'The Russians may be seriously prepared to permit the creation of an independent German Government by free election, and that would destroy all our plans for a German contribution to Western defence.'

Similarly Dalton, who sponsored the Labour Party statement for a possible four-power meeting, emphatically opposed the suggestion that a united Germany should be free to choose independence from the Western war plans:

> Mr. Hugh Dalton told a questioner at a press conference that the Labour Party would not be happy if Germany were completely free to decide whether or not to join the West.
>
> (*Manchester Guardian*, April 28, 1952.)

**Germany for Peace or War?**

Hence the governing character of the Western Powers' reply to the Soviet Union proposals on Germany, delivered on May 13, was the insistence on the absolute and unconditional right to draw German troops into the American War Bloc. Any question of German unity was subordinated to this war aim. In place of a four-power meeting to prepare the holding of free elections of an all-German Government, the reply proposed, as a preliminary delaying alternative, an 'impartial commission of investigation'. not to prepare free elections, but to inquire whether the conditions existed for free elections (presumably to inquire whether the West German police terror, banning of the demand for peace as subversive, closing down of working-class journals and shooting down of youth demonstrations was compatible with free elections). The real aim behind this delaying tactic was manifested in the categoric rejection of the Soviet proposal that an independent, united Germany should 'pledge herself not to enter into any coalitions or military alliances whatsoever directed against any Power which took part with its armed forces in the war against Germany'. No less significant was the formal repudiation of the agreements reached at Potsdam on the frontiers of Germany (in the transparent disguise of declaring their plain meaning an 'erroneous interpretation'). Meanwhile the Western Powers made clear in the accompanying governmental declaration that they



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were determined to go full speed ahead with the illegal 'contractual agreement' to tie up the Adenauer régime in Western Germany with the Atlantic War Bloc.

**Aims of Aggression**

The strategic aim of the Western Powers' indecent haste to drag a remilitarised Western Germany into the Atlantic War Bloc is coming more and more into the open. The plan to prepare aggression against Eastern Europe (in the name of 'recovering Germany's lost territories' and 'liberating the peoples of Eastern Europe', i.e. resumption of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*), is beginning to be ever more plainly declared. Indeed Adenauer has been brutally frank:

> We shall only be able to regain the German East through membership of the European Community and the Atlantic Pact.
>
> (Chancellor Adenauer in Bonn debate on German army, February 8, 1952.)

The idea of a 'defensive' aim against a hypothetical attack has been laughed to scorn by Walter Lippmann:

> The German response to the situation . . . does make rather a hash of the thesis that the Russians are about to invade Western Europe unless there are 12 German divisions in line to stop them. For the Germans who would be the first to see the invading Russians in their homes seem to think so little of the thesis that they are taking plenty of time to obtain redress for all their grievances against the West before they agree to do anything about the Russians from the East.
>
> (Walter Lippmann in the *Washington Post*, February 12, 1952.)

The German Social Democrats have been even more explicit :

> It is necessary that if war starts it should at once be carried East of the German frontier.
>
> (Dr. Schumacher in the *Comisco Bulletin*, January, 1951.)
>
> Dr. Schumacher said that the first aim of a West German Army would be to reconquer what is now Western Poland and that it must try to fight its battles east of the Vistula.
>
> (*Manchester Guardian*, September 9, 1950.)

Similarly the German Social Democratic representatives at the Bonn meeting with the Labour Party and French Socialist Party in April of this year, made clear that their aims of territorial expansion included also the Sudetenland.

**'Containment Plus'**

The increasing frankness about the aggressive aims of the Atlantic War Bloc, and of the policy of remilitarising Western Germany, has received a further expression in a recent article of the *Economist* (April 26) under the title 'Containment Plus'. The



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article complains that popular opinion in the West is *'as yet'* insufficiently prepared for the aggressive aims of the Atlantic Bloc in Eastern Europe, owing to the official policy of 'discreet silence', and argues that the time has come to end this silence:

> The discreet silence of Western diplomacy about its hopes and purposes in Eastern Europe becomes more and more conspicuous . . .
>
> There are of course good reasons both for official silence and for popular carelessness. People want peace, some of them at almost any price. They will make some effort to keep Communist power where it is now; they are not, as yet, willing to make any effort to push it back to where it was in 1939 . . .
>
> There can indeed be little doubt that there is in Eastern Europe a widespread belief that time will bring what the rulers call a war of aggression and what the ruled call liberation.

The journal accordingly suggests that the time has come when the officially proclaimed aim of 'containment' of the Soviet Union and People's Democracies should be changed to 'containment plus':

> It may mean that planning has moved from containment pure and simple to containment plus all such interference with the Russian sphere of influence as can be safely got away with. The case for making the change to 'containment plus' has been admirably argued in a pamphlet on British foreign policy recently published by a group of Oxford dons (*Britain and the Cold War*).

**Mr. Attlee at Philadelphia**

Once these aggressive aims of the Atlantic Bloc are understood, the significance of Mr. Attlee's recent speech at Philadelphia becomes manifest. Evidently envying Mr. Churchill's prowess at Fulton, Mr. Attlee took a short respite from the battles of policy within the Labour Party in order to journey to Philadelphia and proclaim on March 31 his stirring call to battle in the city of 'brotherly love':

> On the one side you have the peoples who are the inheritors of a great civilisation, a civilisation that derives from Rome, Greece and Palestine. On the other side you have the peoples who willingly or unwillingly are under the domination of a new creed, a creed held fanatically by its adherents.
>
> The next few years may well decide whether these peoples are to lose all that they had of Westernism and be absorbed in the Russian Communist Empire or whether they will regain the freedom which they have lost.

'Regain the freedom which they have lost'—i.e. be brought back under the rule of the Barons and the Boyars, the Fascists and White Guards in the service of Western finance-capital. Lest the



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full meaning of Mr. Attlee's call to battle for the Holy Alliance of Capitalist Restoration should be lost, the *Observer,* of April 6, kindly underlined it:

> Mr. Attlee has a way of making important statements so quietly that his meaning is hardly noticed. In his Philadelphia speech he said that the next few years would decide whether the peoples of Eastern Europe —Poles, Germans, Czechs, Hungarians, Rumanians and Bulgars—were to be absorbed in the Russian Communist Empire or whether they would regain their freedom . . .
>
> Here is indeed the crux of the present stage in the cold war. We are in the middle of a struggle for Europe—the whole of Europe, not only the Western half of it. And even at this moment, though nobody yet speaks much about Eastern Europe, the fate of these countries is once more coming into question.

Hitler's *Mein Kampf* never spoke plainer its aims of aggression to the East.

**The Menace at Our Doors**

Nor is there any room for illusions as to the character of the strategy contemplated for these exalted plans. If any in Britain imagine, as Hitler's Nazis once did in Germany, that they can with impunity toss the firebrands of war into Eastern Europe and Eastern Asia, while remaining snugly at home in security, they will be assuredly undeceived as Hitler's Nazis were undeceived when the flames of the war they had kindled reached Hitler's Chancellery in Berlin. It is Britain that would be destroyed in such a war. The fight in Britain, and above all in the British labour movement, for a radical change in policy is urgent, and needs to be urgently pressed forward, before these criminal plans reach fruition. The immediate aims of this fight, not merely for peace, but for the very existence of Britain, require: first to end the present wars in Eastern Asia, in Malaya and Korea; second, to press for a four power agreement for a united and peaceful Germany; and third, to intensify the campaign for a general settlement through a Five Power Peace Pact.

*May 14, 1952.* R.P.D.



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KOREA 1951

*Engraving by Peter Peri*



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# ATOMIC STRATEGY AND THE ADMIRALTY

Commander E. P. YOUNG, R.N. (Retired)

*[This article is printed as a contribution to discussion, since the importance of the grave questions raised in it, and the authority of the writer's reputation as an expert in this field, justify public ventilation of the issues. The strategic analysis given should not be regarded as a prediction of what will happen, but as a warning to emphasise, as the writer makes clear, the urgent necessity for the people of this country to change a policy which could lead to such an outcome, to press for the prohibition of atomic weapons, and to demand the withdrawal of the American bomber bases from Britain.—Ed., L.M.]*

THE British public is being very gravely misled by its government, and by the Admiralty, as regards its security in the event of war—that is to say, in the event of war by the U.S.A. and its satellites against the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democracies, which is the only war envisaged by our rulers.

My story begins in December, 1950, when I attended a week-end school on the naval defence of Britain at Ashridge College, in order to inform myself of the ideas prevalent on this subject in naval, and also in near-Conservative circles—for Ashridge is not by any means ' non-party ', as is pretended. The lecturers at this School—with the exceptions of an economist from Oxford University, Mr. D. Seers (who, incidentally, was the only one who talked in terms of reality), and a retired judge (who spoke irrelevantly at the end about the abstract idea of 'justice' and the British attitude towards it)—were an impressive body of specially-qualified, high-ranked officers of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, headed by the 3rd Sea Lord and Controller of the Navy, Vice-Admiral Sir Michael Denny.

Except for the last-named, to whom latitude was allowed, presumably, because he was 'in the know', all these officers read their lectures from scripts prepared beforehand and were noticeably careful not to depart from these. The composite picture they presented was an encouraging one, of complete confidence that the navy and air force, suitably reinforced along lines already being followed, could cope successfully with any attempt which might be made by ' the enemy ' (the U.S.S.R. being clearly indicated as the only candidate for that role) to reduce Britain by submarine blockade (represented as the only serious menace



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to her security and to her ability to function as an effective producing and fighting unit). This confidence must have been reassuring to members of the audience who had appreciated and been depressed by the conclusion reached by the economist, Mr. Seers, that 'Britain must either export a large part of her population now; or else build up stocks with which to support her existing population and to keep her industries and internal communications in operation, in the event of her being cut off from further supplies from overseas'.

No mention was made of atomic bombing, but when a question was asked on this subject, the lecturer, Capt. R. G. Onslow, R.N., Director of the Tactical and Staff Duties Division at the Admiralty, gave the impression that this had been taken fully into account. He replied blandly that 'on the basis of experience gained at Bikini, it was considered that the advent of the atomic bomb had not rendered the convoy system any less desirable', and that 'the effects of atomic bombing on a convoy can be reduced to safe proportions by stationing ships somewhat wider apart'. This answer—which is doubtless the agreed 'official answer' of the Admiralty to such a question—was, of course, quite inadequate, since it evaded the major point involved. I find it impossible, however, to understand why this Captain Onslow did not deal with such facts as are pointed out in, for instance, the pamphlet *Atomic Attack*, published in March, 1950, by the Atomic Sciences Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers—in which it is pointed out that the under-water detonation of an atomic bomb in the approaches to a dock area 'might close down that area *for between five and ten years*, whilst the nearer parts of the adjoining town might be immobilised for a shorter period by radio-active spray.' In the foreword to this pamphlet, Professor P. M. S. Blackett, F.R.S., who writes with as much authority as any person in the world, expresses himself as follows:

> I think the arguments presented make inescapable the conclusion that adequate defence of the United Kingdom against atomic attack launched from nearby bases on the Continent is quite impracticable, if only on economic grounds. This conclusion rests on the peculiar geographical position of the United Kingdom and on the high congestion of its population, and in no way conflicts with the conclusion that atomic bombs alone are not likely to be quickly decisive in a major war between Continental Powers such as the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. The United Kingdom, therefore, cannot leave the safety of its population entirely dependent on whether two Great Powers, neither of which it can



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influence overmuch, do or do not come to agreement about the control of atomic energy. It is of paramount importance that our political and military strategic planning must be such as to minimise the likelihood of atomic attacks on the United Kingdom if the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. should go to war, and it is therefore easy to discern a major blunder to be avoided at almost any cost. This is to rely for our military policy on the use of atomic bombs (whether of British or American manufacture is no matter) from British air bases, without preparing adequate defence measures against enemy atomic attacks on our country. Since such a defence plan is economically impossible, any such military policy would be unsound.

It is worth noting, however, that a member of the Association of Scientific Workers got a very different answer from Captain W. J. W. Woods, R.N., Director of the Torpedo, Anti-Submarine and Mine Warfare Division at the Admiralty with whom some of us were discussing the matter just after Captain Onslow had finished his 'sunshine story'. Captain Woods was asked point-blank: 'What is going to happen if, after you have got your convoy through thanks to "the proved excellence of the convoy system" which Captain Onslow has emphasised, it is found that the port for which it is destined, and every alternative port to which it might be diverted, has been rendered unusable *for a long period* by the under-water detonation of a *few* atomic bombs in the approaches?' I do not think I have ever seen a naval officer look so embarrassed. He literally came out with beads of perspiration on the forehead. But he answered, to his credit, quite honestly, that 'that would be very awkward'. 'The possibility had been foreseen', he added, and it was 'worrying the Admiralty a lot'—'*because there is no answer to it!*'

I have quoted the foregoing experience in such detail for two reasons. Firstly because it shows how the Third Sea Lord and his well-briefed team of experts created what they should have known well to be an atmosphere of 'fool's paradise'; and secondly, because, reading the debates on the Defence Estimates in both Houses of Parliament in March, I have realised with alarm that the story has been repeated there. Examination of the speeches made by Mr. Churchill as Minister of Defence, and by the spokesmen of the Admiralty and Air Ministry shows that these also could only create a dangerous atmosphere of 'fool's paradise'. Whether this has been a case of wishful-thinking and self-deception, or was deliberately designed to withhold information from the Lords and the Members of Parliament (and thus also from the British people, and the foreign



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governments which are in various ways concerned), is a matter on which opinion may differ. But there can be no difference of opinion as to the fact that, by masking the fatal vulnerability of Britain to the atomic attack to risk of which the policy of her present government (and of its post-war predecessors), if carried to its logical and intended outcome, will inevitably expose her, it has produced an entirely misleading impression of Britain's 'strength', which it would be both foolish and dangerous to accept, and to use as a basis of policy.

That not all the Lords, and not all the Members of Parliament, are blind to the grim reality of the situation becomes quite evident if one reads the official record of the debates. Some, at least, of them seem to have reached the conclusion which may be drawn from the pamphlet *Atomic Attack*, or from Dr. E. H. Burhop's book, *The Challenge of Atomic Energy* (published in December, 1951), *that the detonation of ten or a dozen atomic bombs under water in the approaches to Britain's major ports could produce, in a matter of weeks, the effect of a successful absolute blockade.* It is disturbing, however, to note that these critics, while recognising the danger and the fact it cannot by any means be averted, do not therefore advocate, as does Professor Blackett in his foreword quoted above, that the government should abandon a policy which exposes Britain to that danger. They attempt, instead to prescribe 'remedies' which their own professional knowledge should tell them cannot possibly remedy the situation.

Mr. Frank Beswick, for instance, a Labour M.P. who was Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation in the last Government, speaking in the debate on the Air Estimates in the House of Commons on March 18, based his remarks on his personal experience as one of the two British M.P.s who witnessed the U.S. atomic tests at Bikini, as follows: 'What occurred to me immediately was, "Here is the method of attack that is going to be the most deadly so far as we are concerned". I could well imagine the Pool of London throwing up similar showers of radio-active spray.' Such deadly bombing could be done, he pointed out, by high-flying aircraft, at distances of as much as 15 miles from the coast, i.e. in circumstances in which it would be virtually impossible to prevent it. So he put to the government the same question as had been asked by the scientist at Ashridge College fifteen months earlier: What is the use of



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providing costly sea and air escorts to get ships past possible blockading submarines, if, at the end of it all, the ships could not be docked for discharging? And since he got no answer from the government spokesman to his awkward question, it would seem reasonable to assume that this prospect is still 'worrying the Admiralty a lot'—'*Because there is no answer to it!*' His own glib solution to the problem thus presented was the provision of 'hundreds — indeed thousands — of transport aircraft to ensure the provision of supplies to Britain'. This is quite obviously fantastic, when one considers the enormous number of aircraft which were required for the Berlin 'air lift', although these were operating in peace-time conditions (i.e. with no opposition) from bases within a hundred, or at most a few hundred miles, of their destination.

The naval spokesmen were no less discouraging. In the House of Commons on March 5, Captain Robert Ryder, V.C., a Conservative M.P., only recently retired from the Active List of the Royal Navy, felt bound to express 'grave doubt' whether it would be possible, even if Britain were to participate on a massive scale—'as a desperate and temporary measure'—in bolstering up the land strength of the European Defence Community or of N.A.T.O., 'to build a barrier of such depth and thickness that it will keep out any modern missile that might be hurled against her'. A fortnight later, morever, in the House of Lords on March 27, another Captain R.N., Lord Teynham, also only recently retired, was more explicit. What worried him, he stated, was that the Admiralty was apparently making insufficient provision for 'large-scale port working *over the beaches*' which, he suggested might be necessary 'at the very outset of a new war'. He was in no doubt at all 'that atomic attack might well stifle a great number of Britain's large ports and make them practically unworkable, in which case she would be driven to *discharging cargo over the beaches*, and failure to provide organisation for this might well mean her *starvation at an early stage*'. As a 'solution' of the problem, this is about as fantastic as Mr. Beswick's 'air lift', for several reasons. In the first place, because the tonnage of merchant shipping required would be prohibitive, and Lord Teynham, as a naval officer of experience, ought to have realised this when demanding 'the provision of a large number of small merchant ships, to which the cargoes of larger ships might be transferred (i.e. with the ships' derricks and cranes),



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in order that discharge may take place in the shallow-water areas (i.e. after further transport to some kind of landing-craft)'. For he must know that it was by no means only war losses which made it difficult to find enough merchant shipping to meet Britain's import requirements during the last war: the basic minimum of shipping which could meet these requirements was effectively increased enormously (a) by the wasteful use of tonnage which is inherent in the convoy system, and (b) by the further wastage resulting from slowness of turn-round in British ports, due to bomb-damage and to black-out conditions. The further wastage he so blandly proposed would clearly be very great indeed. His 'solution' is fantastic, in the second place, because of the difficulty of providing rail, road, or other forms of transport for clearing vast quantities of goods from the open beaches on which they would have been landed (the location of which would have to be constantly changed) and of distributing them to where they are required. A glance at the graphic depiction of Britain's dependence on imports on page five of *Where We Stand This Year,* the popular version of the government's latest Economic Survey, 1952, is sufficient, I think, to show that the best that might be achieved in the circumstances envisaged is the maintenance of the British population at bare subsistence level, but effectively idle, and for war purposes, impotent.

Let us ask ourselves how, in the light of the foregoing, one is to interpret the fact that the present British government has reached its decision to export one-half of Britain's existing *'strategic reserves'*, of food and vital raw materials, and to reduce by two-thirds the projected future accumulations of such 'strategic reserves'? There is, in my opinion, only one way in which to interpret it; the previous Labour governments have been moved by humanitarian motives and by wilful self-deception with regard to the inevitable consequences of their political and military strategy, while the present Conservative government is being realistic, and has cold-bloodedly decided that, from the broader (N.A.T.O.—or should not one be frank, and write 'American'?) point of view it is a waste of good material to accumulate it in Britain for the purpose of prolonging the agony of the British people, since there is no means whereby its ultimate and final catastrophe can be averted. That is, no doubt, why the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. J. P. L. Thomas, though visibly



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nettled by the taunts of the Labour M.P.s, Messrs. Richard Adams and R. T. Paget, on the subject of this decision regarding *'strategic reserves'* and its obvious consequences, declined to be drawn into making any answer. It is also, no doubt, the explanation of why Mr. Churchill has come round to the opinion that it is a good idea to place an important — and as yet undefined — part of the British Navy under the command of an American Commander-in-Chief, with his headquarters on the far side of the Atlantic.

Summing up, it may be stated, without fear of contradiction, that Mr. Churchill and his government have recognised the correctness of Professor Blackett's appreciation of the situation quoted earlier in this article, but have deliberately rejected his advice on what to do in the circumstances: *'Clearly one of the most important courses of action is to press for a new attempt at achieving international control of atomic energy'.*

They know well that if they allow Britain to be used by the United States as an unsinkable, but also immobile, aircraft-carrier from which to launch atomic bombs against the Soviet Union and her associates, Britain is liable to be 'counted out' almost from the start of the subsequent third world war, and would be completely and finally 'finished' whatever might be the outcome of that war. They are prepared, however, to accept the U.S. imperialist view, with which they are in sympathy, that Britain and the British must be regarded as 'expendable', and must be sacrificed 'in the common cause'. But naturally, they are concealing from the British people what lies in store for them, because otherwise it would insist on them taking another way out.

It need hardly be emphasised, therefore, that it is an urgent matter—a matter, literally, of life and death—for the British people to demand the immediate conclusion of a Five-Power Peace Pact, and of an international agreement to ban the use of atomic bombs (and all other weapons of mass destruction) and to establish a system of inspection and control for the enforcement of this ban without infringement of national rights to develop the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. More immediately still, however, it must demand the removal from Britain of the U.S. aircraft which could do nothing to save Britain from the awful fate to which their use would expose her, and of the U.S. armed forces whose very presence, let alone the extra territorial rights which they enjoy, is an infringement of British sovereignty, an insult to British national feeling, and a menace to the establishment of Socialism in Britain.



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# ★ PROGRES

*Nine months have passed since Labour Monthly was compelled, in common with other periodicals, to increase its price.*

*Fears were expressed in many quarters that this increase in price from 1s. to 1s. 6d., which was only adopted with the greatest reluctance under the compulsion of soaring costs, might deal a crippling blow to the circulation of our journal.*

*We are now glad to be able to present to our readers the figures of our net paid circulation, showing the movement since 1950.*

| | *Home* | *Foreign* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1950, January ... ... ... ...* | *11,543* | *2,029* | *13,572* |
| *1951, January ... ... ... ...* | *12,106* | *2,545* | *14,641* |
| *August (last month of the old price)* | *12,544* | *2,977* | *15,521* |
| **NEW PRICE 1/6** | | | |
| *December ... ... ...* | *12,084* | *3,010* | *15,094* |
| *1952 January ... ... ... ...* | *12,231* | *2,719* | *14,950* |
| *February ... ... ... ...* | *12,265* | *2,856* | *15,121* |
| *March ... ... ... ...* | *12,301* | *2,710* | *15,119* |

*These figures are of considerable interest.*

*This has been a period when the circulation of the majority of journals has shown a tendency to drop, and a number of periodicals have had to go out of existence.*

*It is therefore a matter for congratulation that our magazine has been able to achieve this increase in circulation (of no less than 14 per cent) up to the time of the price rise: and, further, that the recent figures show a remarkable recovery from the temporary set-back in the months immediately following the price rise.*

**The figure for January of this year was actually several hundreds higher than January, 1951.**

*In particular we call attention to the RISING NET PAID HOME SALES of the past four months, which are mounting towards the figure just before the price increase. The figures for total sales in the right hand column, which have still a little leeway to make up, are affected by a drop in foreign sales only, due to local conditions in some countries, unconnected with the price change.*



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# REPORT ★

*What are the reasons for this fine record?*

*First, the political situation of increasing urgency of the fight for peace and against Tory policies, and the ever wider recognition of the* **indispensable** *role of the LABOUR MONTHLY as a weapon of all sections of the labour movement, and of all progressive people and supporters of peace, who are striving for an alternative policy, for the needs of the people and for the aims of socialism. The need of living Marxism is greater than ever today.*

*Second, the splendid efforts of a great many readers who have been tirelessly active introducing our journal to new circles among active members in the labour movement. Striking examples are given by the Manager on the cover of this issue.*

*AND NOW AN APPEAL TO* **ALL** *OUR READERS.*

*Are* **you** *doing all you can to spread Labour Monthly and make it known?*

*Do you take every opportunity to introduce it to colleagues on your borough council, Labour or Communist Party branch, trades council, co-operative guild, trade union branch? We know from experience that our journal has only to be brought to active thinking people in the Labour movement for it to win new friends and staunch readers.*

*Here are some practical suggestions:*

1. *See that it is always available whenever your organisation meets. See that it is on the literature stall of every meeting you attend. (And always take your own copy with you, to point out "that smashing article" to your fellow member).*

2. *Make full use of our Free Specimen copy scheme, for people you believe are likely new readers.*

3. *See that it is in your Public Library. (The most Tory of Library Committees are sensitive to public demand for books and periodicals).*

*If these suggestions are acted on by all, we look forward confidently to being able to report a further rise in the near future.*

EDITORIAL BOARD.



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# THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CONFERENCE

MAURICE DOBB

COMPARED with before the war, trade between eastern and western Europe has declined drastically. It was substantially smaller than pre-war even before the American-imposed ban on the export of 'strategic materials'; but the latter has accentuated the decline, and continues to do so. A recent analysis of East-West trade in the *Economic Bulletin for Europe*, issued by the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe (Vol. 3, No. 2), included the following table*:—

**LEVEL OF WESTERN EUROPE'S TRADE WITH EASTERN EUROPE**

| | 1938 | 1948 | 1949 | 1950 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Index Numbers of Volume** | | | | |
| IMPORTS ... ... ... | 100 | 31 | 29 | 28 |
| EXPORTS ... ... ... | 100 | 59 | 72 | 63 |
| **Percentage of Western Europe's Total Trade** | | | | |
| IMPORTS ... ... ... | 9 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| EXPORTS ... ... ... | 6 | 4 | 5 | 3 |

In the case of Britain, exports to Eastern Europe were in 1950 less than a half pre-war; and in 1951 the decline continued. British exports of 'articles wholly or mainly manufactured' to China amounted in 1951 to only one-fifth (in money value) of what they had been in 1947. Yet, in view of the dollar shortage problem, which has beset this country since the war, and the obvious need (if dependence on America is not to plunge this country into one crisis after another) to switch as much trade as possible away from the Western hemisphere to other countries, one could have expected (given a rational trading policy and unobstructed trade) East-West trade in Europe to have expanded very considerably, compared with the pre-war level. As a Report of the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe of four years ago stated:

> It is largely through intensification of trade between the East and the West of Europe that the twin objectives of a reduced dependence on

* In this table Yugoslavia and Eastern Germany are excluded from both groups of countries. 'Eastern Europe' is taken as including Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and U.S.S.R.; 'Western Europe' as including Scandinavian countries and Western Germany.



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overseas supplies for food and raw materials and the optimal development of European resources could best be facilitated. . . . Geographic propinquity and differences in relative stages of industrial development make of Eastern Europe both a market for manufactured goods and a source of supply for essential foodstuffs and materials without giving rise to major difficulties in balancing trade between the two areas.

(Report on *Potentialities for Increased Trade and Accelerated Industrial Development in Europe*, August, 1948.)

Scandinavian countries have so far been the only ones to have taken advantage of the possibilities of increased trade with Eastern Europe; Sweden's trade having nearly doubled in real terms. Denmark had more than doubled her trade with the East in 1948 and 1949; but her adherence to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has caused a sharp drop since then.

It was primarily with the object of finding ways and means of halting and of circumventing these mounting obstacles to international trade that the Preparatory Committee for the International Economic Conference set about its task in Copenhagen as far back as the autumn of last year. It was in a like spirit that the 500-odd participants in the Conference (from 50 different countries) in Moscow during the first ten days of April this year carried out their work. There were some who said that an attempt to tackle the division of the world into rival *blocs* at the purely economic level was useless so long as major political causes of international tension remained unresolved. But there were also others who firmly believed that to enlarge the area of economic co-operation and to develop business contacts in a practical way would itself be an important contribution to international understanding and peaceful co-operation over a much wider field.

The Preparatory Committee issued its appeal to the widest possible circles, irrespective of social or political beliefs—to business circles, academic economists, trade unionists and co-operators. An inspired propaganda campaign soon developed in the West, representing the conference as another communist stunt, a clever propaganda-trap to ensnare the unwary and to weaken the unity of the so-called 'free world'. Rumours circulated in Western Europe that business men so foolish as to accept the invitation to Moscow would find themselves refused a visa when next they wished to visit the U.S.A. The French government forbade any employees of the government to participate (thereby affecting academic circles among others). Mr. Acheson solemnly



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warned his henchmen that it was a 'strategem to lure unsuspecting men of good reputation to participate in order to misuse their names and their public standing'. Taking its cue, our own Trades Union Congress joined with the Federation of British Industries in officially repudiating the conference. The pundits of the *Economist* advised readers to dismiss it as an untimely move. On the eve of the conference 'Critic', of the *New Statesman,* gave it a gentle stab by asserting that the well-meaning economists and business men who were going to Moscow were destined to listen to propaganda speeches denouncing the West and to have their names 'dragged in the mud' and exploited for political ends that were alien to them (although he had the grace to eat his words three weeks later). Two days before the conference was due to open the Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Times* had a verbose paragraph of denunciation, headed 'Danger of Distorted Economics'. 'Died stillborn' was the verdict of the American Sulzberger of the *New York Times* in a message from Paris on April 2.

The result was to scare away a number of persons who had initially expressed an interest in the conference and some sympathy with its aims. There were some stragglers and casualties (as Professor Oskar Lange remarked in his concluding speech to the conference), and delegations were less fully representative than they might otherwise have been. Yet, despite this, the various delegations (including those from the West) were sufficiently representative for a wide variety of opinions to be expressed among them, and for a quite remarkable volume of practical business (in the form of trade contracts and 'letters of agreement') to be done. In this respect the British delegation played a specially prominent rôle; on the morning before the conference was due to open they had an initial meeting with the Chinese at which the latter expressed their desire to buy British consumer goods, including textiles, and which was to be the first stage of an agreement totalling £10 million each way, covering British sales of chemicals, textiles and some metals and Chinese deliveries in exchange of bunker coal, eggs and egg products, bristles, hog-skin casings and general agricultural produce . This was to be followed by similar section-meetings with the representatives of Soviet import and export organisations, with East Germany and Rumania, and with several other countries. The result was that by the conclusion of the conference the British delegation had entered into general agreements covering a total



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trade-turnover of some £30 million; with yet other negotiations pending. These subsequent negotiations were to raise the total figure to a global sum of £56 million. (*Vide* letter of Mr. Sydney Silverman, M.P., in *The Times*, April 25.)

On the third day of the conference the first speech from a Soviet representative (other than the opening speech of welcome from the Mayor of Moscow) sounded a severely practical note, and made a deep impression on the conference. Mr. Nesterov, president of the Chamber of Commerce of the Soviet Union, after paying tribute to the conference as 'the broadest economic gathering that has ever been held', made the declaration that, 'given serious intentions on the part of business circles of other countries to extend trade with Soviet commercial organisations', the latter would be able and willing in the course of the next two or three years to increase the total of Soviet foreign trade by one-half, and to increase trade with Western Europe, America, the Middle East, South-east Asia, Africa and Australia to a level two or three times above the highest post-war figure of trade with this group of countries. As regards trade with Great Britain, this could be expanded to the maximum pre-war figure (that of 1937). Moreover, 'this expansion could be achieved, not only through increased trade in goods customary in Anglo-Soviet commerce', but also through Soviet purchases of textile fabrics, spices, herrings, etc. In return, the Soviet Union could supply Britain with such things as grain, timber and oil products. Similar offers, of a very concrete character, were made by him with reference to other countries of Western Europe: in particular with regard to France, that 'Soviet trade organisations could effect a five- or six-fold increase in their purchases of French goods'. After this speech, any remaining doubts in the minds of the British delegation that they had been brought to Moscow to listen to propaganda speeches in denunciation of the capitalist West were dispelled, and the unanimous verdict was that the conference was a serious business-like affair. In fact, they were to listen on the same day to speeches by Mr. Vickery, of U.S.A., expressing faith in 'the system of free enterprise and individual initiative', and by Lord Boyd Orr, chairman of the British delegation, in which he made laudatory references to the 'Welfare State' in Britain. Lord Boyd Orr closed this speech with an appeal which profoundly moved the conference by its frank sincerity; and its closing words are worth quoting in full, since they express a spirit which in the course of the week



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came to animate even the more cynical and conservative elements at the conference.

> This is the first time that a conference of this kind has ever been called. We must not fail, I beseech you. . . . Get some concrete results which we can take back with us, some results which will lead to some increase in international trade. If we can get that, it will expand further, it will lead to the co-operation of nations, it will lead to science being applied to develop the wealth of the world instead of being applied to the destruction of the world. I hope that this conference will be a great historic occasion and that men in the future will look back to this conference and say: 'Here was the beginning, here we set out on the road to create a world of co-operation, a world of friendship, and a world of peace.'

In his speech on the closing day he had no doubt that it had indeed been an historic occasion: he spoke of the conference as 'an historic event' which had 'accomplished great things', and upon which the future would look back as a landmark.

In addition to the plenary sessions, occupying three and a half days, the conference broke up into three main working groups, each of which made its report to the main session: on the development of international trade, on international economic co-operation for the solution of social problems, and on problems of underdeveloped countries. The practical work of the conference was largely carried out in special section-meetings between the businessmen of various delegations and between individual businessmen, aided by a Bureau of Business Contacts which was set up in the conference hall.

Speaking in one of the three section-meetings (in a speech that was a model of terseness and brevity), Mr. Kuznetsov, the Soviet trade union leader, pointed out that the additional Soviet orders mentioned by Mr. Nesterov three days before were capable of giving employment in total to 'at least one and a half to two million people for three years', and to 200,000 workers in Britain alone.

After the various working groups had reported the main results of their discussions to the full conference, a general *communiqué*, embodying these results, was drawn up by the presiding committee and submitted to the concluding plenary session. It must be regarded as one of the signal achievements of the conference and of its steering committee that this *communiqué*, summarising the achievements and the measure of common agreement reached, was adopted unanimously. Among other things, this *communiqué*



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placed on record that: 'The conference . . . established that deterioration of international relations, especially aggravated in the past few years, has increased the artificial barriers which are impeding trade between countries. . . . Dislocation of world trade is gravely jeopardising the economic development of a number of countries, is adversely affecting balances of trade and payments, and is exerting an unfavourable influence on living standards by worsening food supplies, raising prices, increasing unemployment, and impeding social progress, in particular curtailing housing construction.

'The conference unanimously established, following a broad and free exchange of opinion, that the volume of world trade can be increased considerably and that extension of trade relations between countries could bring many advantages to business circles, industrialists, traders, agriculturists. It would lead to better utilisation of the economic resources of all countries and would promote employment and higher living standards for the people.'

The conference further adopted an Appeal to the General Assembly of the United Nations, calling upon it 'to convene, at the earliest possible date, a conference of representatives of governments with the participation of business circles, trade unions and other social organisations of all countries for the purpose of promoting an expansion of international trade, "on a basis of equality and with due regard to the needs of the industrialisation of underdeveloped countries" '.

It is I think a significant index of the success and of the world-wide impact of this remarkable conference that towards its end even the Press of the West began to change its tone, if sometimes grudgingly and with ill grace. Most notable in this connection was the tone of a leader-page article in *The Times* on April 14 on what it called a 'unique' conference. In face of Lancashire's keen interest in textile orders, the *Manchester Guardian* was induced to pay serious attention to statements by returning delegates. The Board of Trade, thrown on the defensive, placed itself in the odd position of issuing a 'sour grapes' statement about the trade-contracts of the conference (why had these not been done through 'normal' channels?); while at the week-end a junior Minister was to devote a speech to lamely deriding the efforts of 'amateurs' to improve trade, while hastening to assure his audience that he was not opposed in principle to trade improvement.



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Even Mr. Acheson was made to shift his gramophone record and to talk of a Soviet 'golden apple offensive'.

If one is to try and summarise the results of this unique conference, the following have to be mentioned as outstanding achievements.

Firstly, there was general acceptance of the suggestion (made in the working group on international trade) that the conference should be followed at a fairly early date by a further and even more representative one, to further and to extend the work of the first; and a continuing Committee for the Promotion of International Trade, composed of 30 persons representative of the main countries, both east and west, was set up to carry on the work. (The English representatives on this continuing Committee were Mrs. Joan Robinson, the well-known economist, and Mr. Jack Perry, one of the two vice-chairmen of the British Delegation, who had taken a specially prominent part in the trading negotiations attendant on the conference.)

Secondly, some highly important contracts were entered into, such as those already mentioned in the case of Britain: contracts which are manifestly, not an end, but a beginning of larger measures of economic exchange and co-operation; and which carry a promise of 'bursting the (so-called) iron curtain by wagons of goods from the East bringing a surplus of goods which the West needs, and wagons of goods taking surplus goods from the West that the East needs' (to quote again from Lord Boyd Orr).

The third can best be expressed in the words of Professor Oskar Lange (of Poland), who had acted as chairman of the presiding committee, in his speech at the final session. 'We have also, all of us, travelled a long road in the development of our mental attitude', he said:

> We started our pioneering efforts in the belief that differences in economic and social systems do not constitute an obstacle to peaceful and mutually advantageous economic relations between nations, in the belief that mutual understanding and co-operation in the economic field may also contribute to a general lessening of international tension. This wish animated our conference from its very start. But it is only fair to say that many of those present, while sincerely wishing that economic co-operation between nations irrespective of their economic and social systems would be possible, came here with many doubts in their minds. The successful work and conclusion of our conference have dispelled any doubts which may have existed. The belief that mutual economic co-operation is possible now becomes a firm conviction. In this way the



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attitude of many participants of the conference has matured: starting with good intentions mixed with apprehensions and doubts, it ripened into firm conviction based on the practical experience of our common work. We have learned to know each other and, what is most important, to work together. This is in my opinion the most important achievement of the conference.

Fourthly, the conference witnessed the very significant declaration that the Soviet Union is willing to import consumer goods on a substantial scale. This is, to my mind, significant for two reasons among others. It shows that in face of the American Battle Act and its ban on the export to U.S.S.R. of so-called 'strategic materials', the Soviet Government sees no need to adopt a defeatist attitude towards the development of international trade with all countries. Contrary to statements that have been current in the West, there is no design to make of Eastern Europe a closed, autarkic economic unit, isolated from the West: on the contrary, the Soviet Union is anxious to take the lead in an expansion of world trade and of contact between East and West. Further, it shows that Soviet economy has reached a stage in its development where it can afford to relax the overriding priority which it has hitherto assigned to import of things essential for capital construction (machinery, generating plant, etc.) and of scarce industrial raw materials. Post-war reconstruction has been so successful as to permit a rapid rise in the standard of life. The great construction-efforts of two decades in building a heavy industry of outstanding proportions have given to the U.S.S.R. resources to spare (which were lacking in the '30's and in the immediate post-war years) for expanding the quantity and variety of consumer goods, and laying the basis for that 'start of the transition from socialism to communism' of which the whole country is today talking. To import consumer goods, such as Yorkshire worsteds and Lancashire dress materials and products of the English milliners' art, is for the Soviet Union a sign of developing economic strength, and is a means by which the developing needs of the Soviet consumer can be satisfied sooner than otherwise, at the same time as unemployment in Britain is allayed.

Finally, there is perhaps not a great deal that needs to be said of the impression created on visitors to the conference by a fortnight in Moscow. So far as it is possible to speak of the British delegation as a whole, I think one can say that the predominant impression was surprise at how well fed and clothed the people



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were (and especially the children) whom one met in the streets, on the buses or in the Metro and in public places generally; surprise at the sheer normality of life (at the absence of signs of strain or tension, as several returning delegates have expressed it) and the ease and friendliness and personal dignity of the ordinary Muscovite; surprise at the abundance, alike in quantity and variety, of consumer goods available in the (generally very crowded) shops. There were all the signs of a rapid rise in the standard of life in recent years. There were all the symptoms of abundance of purchasing power in consumers' hands, and (though supplies are increasing) of demand for consumer goods keeping ahead of supply. In a mere two weeks, so largely occupied with conference agenda, there was only limited opportunity to look into economic and social conditions more widely or more deeply than these superficial observations imply. But visiting delegates, I think, mostly saw enough to appreciate that the improvements which they noted were not the privilege of a narrow circle but were widely diffused among the people; that the inhabitants of the Soviet capital were not only well-supplied with the material things of life, but were a cultured and self-reliant people to an extent which could hardly fail to impress even the hardened sceptic; and to sense a deep feeling of confidence in the future, which is a surest sign of a people's faith in peace and in the 'peaceful co-existence' of different social systems.

### FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO
### THE REFORMISTS' BAG OF TRICKS

But against this move of the bourgeoisie to more and more open class struggle the reformists are powerless with their bagful of old Liberal sermons, apologies, pious aspirations, parliamentary precedents, pacifism, legal lore and constitutional sanctity. It is no doubt very fine and ennobling to point out that the Trade Unions Bill contains principles unheard of since 1799, or even 'since Richard II' ('with the exception of the Statute of 1563'); that it is injurious to the sacred cause of industrial peace; that it is contrary to progressive principles and a reversal of the clock; that it is infamous class-legislation; that it will plunge the country into bitter strife; and all the other tags. But the only answer these statesmanlike Labour leaders receive is that the street-boy-in-office, Birkenhead, says 'Yah!' informs them that thirty thousand speeches won't worry the Government, and adds as a parting shot (knowing that it will rile them more than for a Presbyterian minister to be accused of haunting night-clubs or a temperance reformer to be accused of secret drinking) that they are all 'paid by Moscow' and receive their orders daily every morning by post.

From the *Notes of the Month*, by R.P.D., June 1927.



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# THE MINERS' FIGHT

GEORGE COMERFORD

*(Delegate, Comrie Branch, Scottish area of the National Union of Mineworkers)*

A PROXY vote from the Areas of the National Union of Mineworkers has gone in favour of the continuation of Saturday working for another year. The whole capitalist press is jubilant and claims that it is a great victory for Union leaders. It may be a great victory for some Union leaders and for the Tory government, but increased hours and the lengthening of the working week is never a victory for the miners.

In 1926, after a long struggle, the Tory government succeeded in increasing working hours from seven to eight per day, but nobody declared then that that was a victory for the miners. It was a setback to the miners, with the Tory government and the employers using the longer working day to further exploit the working class and reduce their standard of living. This is already shown in the anti-working class budget of the Tory government and despite all the trickery on the part of the government with regard to concessions, every working class family is beginning to realise that it means a vicious attack on working class conditions.

All the talk from the Right Wing Labour leaders will not succeed in holding back the industrial movement. Bread-and-butter is both an industrial and a political fight, and it would be good for some of our present miners' leaders to pay heed to the words of the pioneers such as Bob Smillie. In 1919 he challenged the Labour Party Executive to explain when an industrial problem ended and when a political problem began. The challenge was not met, because there can be no separation of industrial from political problems. Just as the Trades Union Congress declares that the present policy of the Tory government will lead to widespread demands for wage increases, so must the General Council be made to understand that refusal on the part of the employers and the government to concede wage demands will lead to industrial action, as it has always done in the struggles of the British working class.

The Scottish miners have demonstrated quite clearly that they are not prepared to allow the Tory government to attack their living standards, nor are they prepared to give up the Five Day



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Week Agreement indefinitely for a Tory government—the arch-enemy of the miners and the British working class. The Scottish Miners' Union protested unanimously against the cuts in social services, and again protested against the anti-working class budget. This policy was backed up by action at several pits in Scotland. The miners at Muirkirk mobilised the whole movement against the cuts for several weeks and eventually, after pit meetings on every shift, decided to take one day's protest strike on budget day. In Bowhill, Carberry, Polkemmet and several other collieries, the miners stopped work on one or two Saturdays as a protest against the anti-working class budget. In my own colliery, Comrie, we have taken similar action, and never have we had such a campaign at the colliery as on the vote for or against Saturday work. We evolved a new way of discussing such an important issue. We set up a rostrum in the pit yard from which every miner wishing to take part in the debate had to speak. Very many did so and expressed themselves in many ways. The outcome was that a special branch meeting was convened to take a final decision. Over two hundred miners attended this meeting and decided against the continuation of Saturday work. The biggest colliery in Scotland—Michael Colliery—also voted against the continuation of Saturday work. It is not surprising that with this wide discussion among the rank-and-file, the Scottish miners voted by a majority of over two to one against the continuation of Saturday working, in spite of a vicious and lying campaign in the Tory press against the Scottish miners and their executive committee.

It should be understood that this is only the first round in the fight, and while the Tory press is jubilant and shouting from the house-tops that the national decision is a great victory for the Union leaders, they may be counting their chickens before they are hatched. At the N.U.M. National Conference on 14th March, in London, five districts voted against the continuation of Saturday working, with two districts remaining neutral.

Many of the miners who voted for Saturday working, including Scottish miners, did not vote in that way out of loyalty to the Tory Government or in support of their rearmament programme, but mainly because wages for the five day week are insufficient to make ends meet. Some of the Right Wing leaders used this as an argument in support of the miners working on Saturdays, not realising that this was a condemnation of their own policy. Their



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sincerity will soon be put to the test, however, since the miners all over the country will be demanding the implementation of the Special Conference decision for an increase in wages. On this occasion the miners will expect a substantial increase which will enable them to live on the wages for a normal working week of five days, without having to work overtime to make ends meet. The working of systematic overtime and a longer working week is a die-hard Tory policy and should not be tolerated by the trade union movement. The same Tories, when it was convenient, threw thousands of miners on the scrap heap, and they would do it again should the occasion arise, as they are doing now in the cotton industry. We miners will be living in a fool's paradise if we conclude that we are safeguarded against this rising tide of unemployment.

The fight for the five day week, for the increased wages and against the anti-working class budget is not at an end, but has only begun, and 1952 will see a big movement in the coalfield on these important matters. While the final vote only showed three districts (Scotland, Northumberland and Kent) against Saturday working, this in no way reflects the true position amongst the British miners.

We all remember the fight which took place in 1948, 1949 and 1950 on the policy of wage freezing. At the beginning of the fight only a handful of miners raised their voices, but eventually the miners realised what wage freezing really meant in relation to their living standards. They turned a minority vote into a huge majority against this anti-working class policy. The same will apply to Saturday working. The miners will soon realise that the continuation of Saturday work under a Tory government, shackled to American imperialism and preparing for war, is really a policy against the interests of the working class. It will not lead to an improvement in the standard of living, but rather to a considerable worsening of our living conditions. In this fight the miners will not forget that it is the Tories who now want to deprive the miners of the five day week.

As a working miner, I appeal to all my fellow workers in every part of the British Coalfield to unite their forces and strengthen the fight of the Trade Union at every colliery for the five day week, for substantial increases in wages, against the anti-working class Budget, for the defeat of the Tory Government and for a real working class victory in 1952.



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# DAVID RICARDO

R. PAGE ARNOT

WHEN Lenin nearly forty years ago wrote of Marx as 'the genius who continued and completed the three main ideological currents of the nineteenth century' and of his teaching as the legitimate successor 'of the best that was created by humanity in the nineteenth century in the shape of German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism' the reference in the economic field was mainly to Ricardo. Of classical political economy as it evolved in this country Lenin remarked that 'Adam Smith and David Ricardo, by their investigations of the economic system, laid the foundations of the *labour theory of value*. Marx continued their work'.

Ricardo's writings must always occupy a high place in the British cultural heritage; and their relevance today is increasingly acknowledged. It is therefore a matter of great satisfaction that the enterprise begun more than twenty years ago by Piero Sraffa to present the whole of Ricardo's works and correspondence has in these last twelve months reached the stage of publication. The length of time it has taken reflects not only the extreme care and thoroughness of the editor (involving an encyclopaedic grasp of all that is essentially related to his subject) but also the painstaking search in Britain and in Europe for materials and lost manuscripts—happily rewarded by many discoveries and finally by the finding in 1943 of a locked metal box in County Dublin containing a parcel addressed to John Stuart Mill and inscribed 'Mr. David Ricardo's manuscripts'. This edition is nothing less than a masterpiece of scholarship. It is an example, rare in Britain in these days, of a life devoted to achieving something with a result that justifies the labour and the toil.

Since last summer five volumes have appeared, (*) admirably printed, with full use of typographical resources and cheap at

**The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo* edited by Piero Sraffa with the collaboration of M. H. Dobb. Vol I. Principles of Political Economy: Vol. II. Notes on Malthus: Vols. III and IV. Pamphlets and Papers 1809—11 and 1815—23: Vol. V. Speeches and Evidence. (pp. 2440 in all, Cambridge University Press. 24s. each volume.)



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the price. The volumes may be expensive but they are not dear. For there seems to be nothing lacking in this of what a complete edition of a classic should be. No library can be without it nor any librarian who respects his own function.

Ricardo's work was the climax of classical bourgeois political economy, of that period of 'scientific and objective enquiry' before the rot set in. When Adam Smith published his *Wealth of Nations,* Ricardo was four years of age; Marx was three years of age when Ricardo published his *Principles* in their third edition. Between each the gulf in thought was even greater than the gulf in time. Adam Smith, writing in the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, was concerned with the critique of Mercantilism and the advocacy of 'economic freedom' and considered that the interests of the three 'constituent orders' that lived by rent, by wages and by profit could on the whole be harmonised. Ricardo, coming at a later stage when issues were more clearly defined, unreservedly took the standpoint of the industrial bourgeoisie. He became their spokesman against the landed aristocracy. For in 1821 that battle was still being fought and the bourgeoisie were still a rising class. Just fifty years after the death of Ricardo, there appeared in the preface to the second edition of *Capital* these words on the political economy of this country.

> Its last great representative, Ricardo, in the end, consciously makes the antagonism of class-interests, of wages and profits, of profits and rent, the starting point of his investigations, naively taking this antagonism for a social law of nature. . . .
>
> With the year 1830 came the decisive crisis. In France and in England the bourgeoisie had conquered political power. Thenceforth, the class-struggle, practically as well as theoretically, took on more and more outspoken and threatening forms. It sounded the knell of scientific bourgeois economy. It was thenceforth no longer a question, whether this theorem or that was true, but whether it was useful to capital or harmful, expedient or inexpedient, politically dangerous or not. In place of disinterested inquirers, there were hired prize-fighters; in place of genuine scientific research, the bad conscience and the evil intent of apologetic.

Thereafter the scientific achievements of classical political economy were continued only by the revolutionary critique of that bourgeois economy, only by scientific socialism; and, of such critique in so far as it represents a class, Marx went on to say:—'it can only represent the class whose vocation in history



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is the overthrow of the capitalist mode of production and the final abolition of classes—the proletariat'. Thus his first book on this subject bore the title *Critique of Political Economy* and these same words are the sub-title, in the German original, of each of the three volumes of *Capital*. In fact the starting point of Marx's analysis is his critical examination of the classical school, above all of the Ricardian system, a criticism so deep-going as to shake every stone in the old edifice.

Ricardo's concept of capitalism as a final, lasting and rational system is replaced by Marx's dialectical concept of capitalism as a passing phase, as a contradictory system which only temporarily played a progressive role. Ricardo saw only the quantitative exchange relations, determined by social labour; Marx, with his deep understanding of the historical character of economic categories, revealed abstract labour as the substance of value, the key to the riddle of money. Ricardo confused values and prices of production, and was therefore not fully consistent in the determination of value by socially necessary labour. Marx solved these contradictions; his theory of the equal rate of profit helps also to solve the problem of rent. Marx refutes the dogma of 'diminishing returns' which plays a great part in Ricardo's theory of rent. Ricardo cannot make clear the problems of reproduction of capital, of accumulation, because he confuses fixed and constant capital and forgets that accumulation demands transformation of revenue not into variable capital only, but into variable and constant capital.

With the greatest sharpness Marx criticises Ricardo's lack of understanding of the contradictions inherent in capital, his denial of the possibility of general overproduction. Indeed, perhaps the outstanding weakness of Ricardo is his attitude to economic crises. So obsessed was he with diminishing returns on land (and hence, in the absence of free import, a rising cost of growing corn) as the principal cause of a fall in the rate of profit, as to cause him to contest Malthus' view that the rapidity of capital accumulation could lead to a 'general glut' or crisis of overproduction. Malthus' cure for this was to keep alive a class of 'unproductive consumers' and hence maintain a 'healthy balance' in society. His desire to refute this apology for the landed gentry led Ricardo into the untenable position of denying the possibility of 'general overproduction' (by acceptance of the fallacious 'Say's Law' of the identity of supply and demand).



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Much though Marx criticised Ricardo (and how much is known to readers of *Theories of Surplus Value*, in part made available in English this year by G. A. Bonner and Emile Burns) he never ceased to make clear his esteem for this remarkable thinker, and his deep admiration of the man. On the *Principles of Political Economy* (Volume I of the new edition) he speaks of 'the high theoretical pleasure derived from these first two chapters' (which give the essence of the whole),

> . . . because of their originality, unity of basic conception, simplicity, concentration, depth, novelty and comprehensive conciseness.

When, as once before in his 1859 *Critique*, Marx again stresses Ricardo's starting point in the determination of value by labour-time as his great historical significance, he goes on to say:—

> With this service to economic science is closely linked the fact that Ricardo discovers and proclaims the economic contradiction between the classes—as shown by the intrinsic relations—and hence the historical struggle and process of development is grasped at its roots and disclosed in economic science. Carey therefore denounces him as the father of communism.

Indeed, Engels points out that the publication of the *Principles* was followed in the eighteen-twenties by

> . . . an entire literature which directed the Ricardian theories of value and surplus-value against capitalist production in the interest of the proletariat fighting the bourgeoisie with its own weapons. The entire communism of Owen, so far as it plays a role in economics and politics, is based on Ricardo.

From this point begins the century's dance of the 'vulgar' economists, with whom not truth but the defence of capitalism came first. The first stage was the adulteration of Ricardo's doctrine by those who proclaimed themselves his disciples. Then after 50 years the egregious Jevons* passed to the direct attack, saying of Ricardo that he had 'shunted the car of economic science on to the wrong line' and choosing instead a subjective theory of value (marginal utility). With Ricardo thus 'overthrown' (and, as was written 33 years ago of an essential doctrine of Marxism, 'considered dead and buried, to the accompaniment of scornful hisses on the part of the eunuchs of the bourgeois universities and the mandarins of socialist opportunism') the next stage was his carefully controlled 'resurrection' and reception as a purified soul, into the heaven of 'vulgar' economy. This was done in the next generation by Marshall and his followers,

* Jevons once "proved" that the parcel post would be economically impossible, as Bernard Shaw recalled (in a letter to me in 1947).



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who began to 'defend' Ricardo as having actually anticipated their own theory of value. The view was put about that Ricardo, having started with a 'crude' and 'primitive' labour theory of value, progressively watered it down in successive editions, under pressure of criticism and in his maturer thought, until it became something close to the theories of Marshall (*) and Co.

In the introduction to the new edition it is said:

> Thus the view of a retreat in Ricardo's position over successive editions has become established. But an examination of the changes in the text in the light of the new evidence lends no support to this view: the theory of edition 3 appears to be the same, in essence and in emphasis, as that of edition 1.

Thus the whole thing was a lying fabrication, comparable only to the false genealogies invented by the Tudor College of Heralds to support the pretensions of the new bourgeoisie. The purpose was to claim themselves as the sole true heirs and legitimate successors of the great tradition of Ricardo and at the same time to put the brand of bastardy upon Marx, who stemmed from the crude' value-theory of Ricardo of the 1st edition, mere illicit relations of thought which the maturer Ricardo was presented as having discarded.

But now comes additional material. In Volume IV there is printed something which shows that Ricardo at the end of his life was coming closer to Marx and not going further away as had been falsely alleged. This, the newly discovered manuscript of a paper on 'Absolute Value and Exchangeable Value' on which Ricardo was engaged at the time of his death, showed that he continued up to the last to hold to the notion of an 'absolute value', as something distinct from and, as it were, lying behind exchangeable value (—Marx's Price of Production); and although he was never successful in resolving the problem of the relationship between the two, we now see that he returned to this problem at the end and tried to develop it further, appreciating that it was crucial—as Marx stresses that it was in the *Theorien*.

Ricardo originally shared the prevalent opinion that workers displaced by machinery must find employment immediately by capital set free. In the third edition he added a new chapter in which he declared:

*Marshall in an Appendix to his 'Principles of Economics' meanly gave currency to the story that Ricardo had not meant his work for publication, but only for perusal among a few members of the ruling class—who presumably would not have been upset by something 'crude' in a semi-private document.



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> The opinion entertained by the labouring class, that the employment of machinery is frequently detrimental to their interests, is not founded on prejudice and error, but is conformable to the correct principles of political economy.

This shocked his disciple McCulloch (editor of *The Scotsman* and a propagandist for free trade), who replied in alarm that if Ricardo's new opinion was correct, 'the laws against the Luddites are a disgrace to the Statute book'. But Marx warmly commends Ricardo for having expressly disclaimed his original opinion 'with the scientific impartiality and love of truth characteristic of him'.

What Marx admires and praises most in Ricardo is his unswerving intellectual honesty. He follows the path of scientific truth as he sees it without caring whose interests are hurt by the consequences at which he arrives. In this respect Malthus is the very opposite, defender of all vested reactionary interests—landed aristocracy, state, church, etc.—twisting and turning his economic doctrines as those interests demand. Hence, Marx's indignation at the 'baseness' of Malthus ('Abysmal baseness is characteristic for Malthus') as well as at 'his shameless professional plagiarism'. Marx develops this condemnation of Malthus in contrast to his esteem for Ricardo in a passage worth quoting:—

> 'Base' I call a man who tries to accommodate science to a point of view not taken, however erroneously, from science itself but from *alien, external interests*. . . . Where, therefore, it is a case of any interest of the aristocracy against the bourgeoisie, or of the conservative and stagnant bourgeoisie against the progressive bourgeoisie—in all these cases 'Parson' Malthus does not sacrifice special interests to production, but tries, as far as he can, to sacrifice the demands of production to the special interest of existing ruling classes or fractions of classes, and to this end he falsifies his scientific conclusions.*
>
> (*Theorien über den Mehrwehrt*, Vol. II, p. 313.)

With Marx calling us thus to 'Look here, upon this picture, and on this', it is with intense and pleasurable anticipation that we turn to Volume Two, where for the first time published in the form projected 130 yars ago, we have this 'new book' by Ricardo, demolishing Malthus—and demolishing not a few present-day arguments as well. The story of how this came about is interesting. No sooner had Ricardo published his *Principles of Political Economy* in 1817 than Malthus was itching to answer it: this he did in 1820 in Malthus' *Principles of Political Economy*. Ricardo in turn felt for a time that the best way to make a

* This is only one of many devastating passages on Malthus in the *Theorien*.



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rejoinder would be by himself re-publishing Malthus' *Principles* with destructive footnotes added to it. These notes were duly written, sent to James Mill and McCulloch, shown to Malthus himself and then lost. They were not rediscovered till nearly a century later, and were published in 1928 in the U.S.A. in a form necessarily differing from that originally devised by Ricardo. But now, like some Faust conjuring up Helen of Troy and the paladins of the past, Sraffa has set the two contestants in the ring, so that we standing by may shout

Hic Rhodus, hic salta.

Here we have Malthus harping on his egregious theory that to compensate for deficiency of demand a country 'should possess a body of unproductive consumers'—which is closely akin to the Keynesian theory, while his idea that exchange value depends on effective demand is identical with the concepts of subjective theories of value. Here are some of Ricardo's scathing answers, which can also be applied and used against present-day academic absurdities.

> In what way can a man's consuming my produce, without making me any return whatever, enable me to make a fortune? I should think my fortune would be more likely to be made if the consumer of my produce returned me an equivalent value. (p. 422.)
>
> How can unproductive consumption increase profits? . . . Will the taking of 100 pieces of cloth from a clothiers manufactory, and clothing soldiers and sailors with it, add to his profits? Will it stimulate him to to produce?—Yes, in the same way as a fire would. (p. 423.)

Armaments and war regarded as a means of keeping up profits appears not to be such a new idea. Some people 'profit' from unproductive consumption. In this case they are paid out of the taxes. Ricardo very plainly shows that production and the wealth of society as a whole 'profits' in this way as little as it would by a fire or a burglary. Again when Malthus put forward his contention that 'a body of unproductive consumers is necessary. Their specific use in encouraging wealth is, to maintain such a balance between produce and consumption as to give the greatest exchangeable value to the results of the national industry'. Ricardo replies

> How can they by their consumption give value to the results of the national industry? It might as justly be contended that an earthquake which overthrows my house and buries my property, gives value to the national industry. (p. 436.)

When Malthus, still harping on his 'unproductive consumers' puts forward the Keynesian remedies such as:—'Public works,



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the making and repairing of roads, and a tendency among persons of fortune to improve their grounds, and keep more servants, are the most direct means within our power of restoring the demand for labour', Ricardo with complete topicality for the present day answers from the cellarage of the printed page:

> If the people will not expend enough themselves, what can be more expedient than to call upon the state to spend for them? What could be more wise if Mr. Malthus' doctrine be true than to increase the army, and double the salaries of all the officers of the Government? (p. 450.)

But it was not only the Malthusian fallacies which Ricardo exposed. In his *Value, Price and Profit* Marx speaks of 'the great merit of Ricardo that in his work on *The Principles of Political Eocnomy,* published in 1817, he fundamentally destroyed the old, popular, and worn-out fallacy that "wages determine prices".' This hoary fallacy is still the stock-in-trade of bourgeois remnants and right wing labour leaders, who pretend to be promoting a scientific truth when they are doing nothing but reciting a dogma exploded by Ricardo a century and more ago.

A century of bourgeois economy has amply proved that after the climax reached with Ricardo there was only one alternative: *either* to carry on in the scientific spirit of Ricardo, overcome his historic limitations, derive the ultimate conclusions from the analysis of class structure and class contradictions: conclusions which necessarily transcend the framework of *bourgeois* economy and lead on to Scientific Socialism—or to break with the great traditions of the classical school, depart from the straight path of objective investigation of social reality, resign the high task of finding 'the law of motion' of society behind appearances, and to sink deeper and deeper into the morass of vulgar economy and apologetics. Now we are witnessing the self-confessed collapse of these pygmies: and, as they collapse, the stature of David Ricardo grows greater. The greatness of Ricardo consists above all in his preparatory clearing of the ground, his critique of all previous political economy and his 'relentless drawing of ultimate conclusions' on the basis of which it was possible to construct the economic doctrine of Marxism.

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## Book Reviews

### FREEDOM AND SCIENCE

*Land in Bloom,* by V. Safanov. (542 pp. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow. Collet's, London. 6s.)

THIS book describes Soviet horticulture and agricultural techniques, their history and progress; it will appeal to those who have never even achieved plants in a window box. For above all this is a book about people and the relations between them. It tells the triumph, not of the great scientist or a school of scientists working alone in their laboratories, but of whole masses of people, including scores of thousands of collective farmers, themselves experimenters and innovators, eagerly co-operating with scientists and technicians. As the ideas of Michurin science seize them, they seize hold of science, recognising the tremendous possibilities of becoming masters of the land in a new sense. Here is no picture of scientists isolated from the people, whose freedom of choice is of serving in the laboratories of Big Business; of becoming security-fettered civil servants harnessed to war purposes, or seeing pitiably small Government grants for health research cut to the bone; or of research in a university timidly hoping for a share in some local citizen's patronising endowment. Here is a picture of scientists whose only strings are such as to harness them to the needs of a free people who co-operate with intelligence and enthusiasm. Impossible to detail the richness of the book; the astounding pre-war All-Union competition for young scientists 'to show which of them had filled most "blank spaces" in our knowledge of the world' (8,000 under 30 responded, including schoolchildren); the patient schoolgirl experimenter producing 1,035 tubers from one potato; the inspiring rescue during the siege of Leningrad of their All-Union Institute of Plant Industry, with its world collection of seeds, by scientists, many of whom lost their lives in doing so. One example to sum up the reasons for this tremendous contrast; much decorated 'Pasha Angelina', once child of poor peasants and now tractor brigade leader and Stalin prize winner, was approached for her biography by editors of an American reference book. She noted their description of the British peer who had 'risen from the ranks of the people' and replied superbly that, in contrast, she had risen 'with the people. This is the chief thing.' This beautiful book should be read by everyone; it is of enthralling interest.

ANGELA TUCKETT.

### CHESS

*The World Chess Championship: 1951,* by William Winter and R. G. Wade. (133 pp. Turnstile Press, 15s.)

THERE has never been a world chess championship match to equal that between Botvinnik and Bronstein last year for the high quality and strenuous fighting quality of the games or the superb organisation of the encounter. This worthy record of the contest owes much to the eye-witness commentary of Wade, who devotes an exciting chapter to the scene in Moscow, and to Winter's scholarly notes to the games, presenting both his own keen-sighted analysis and that of Soviet chess masters. It is an indication of the difficulty of the modern game, as developed particularly by the Soviet school, that in some of the later



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games annotations by Soviet masters published after this book went to press have called attention to critical moves which Winter has left without comment (e.g. move 21 in the 19th game). The book includes also a history of championship chess and a record of the careers of the two contestants. It is a pity that the price should be so high. C.P.D.

A NEW JOURNAL

*Past and Present: A journal of scientific history.* Number One. February, 1952. (John Morris, 9s.)

READERS of *Labour Monthly*, accustomed to the idea that all sound politics have their base in history, will welcome this new journal. Its editorial board, comprising among others of the highest academic distinction, such names as A. H. M. Jones, Professor of Ancient History at Cambridge; Gordon Childe, Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at London; and Christopher Hill, of Balliol College, Oxford, inspires confidence, as does also its list of advisers from all over the world. Still more reassuring is the statement of its aims. 'We should perhaps today rely, not on discovering past parallels, but on understanding how change took place in the past; but we share the belief of Polybius in the value of history for the present, and in particular his conception of historical discipline as an instrument enabling us "to face coming events with confidence".' The contents range over all space and time. Professor Wu Ta-k'un offers some comments on Chinese economic history during the space of some 2,000 years which are helpful for an understanding of the new China. Professor Jones on *The Economic Basis of Athenian Democracy* is immensely learned and instructive if a trifle academic in


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ESTABLISHED 1936

Volume XVI, Number 1

Spring, 1952

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deducing only negative conclusions from his facts. Rodney Hilton argues the importance for historians of capitalism of sticking to the scientific definition of it given by Marx. A pretty wit seasons V. Kiernan's illuminating study of *Evangelicalism and the French Revolution*. E. J. Hobsbawm does a real service to the history of social struggle in this country by showing the degree of intelligence and success present in the activities of the machine breakers. To see planning, co-operation, and even partially successful defence of living standards where others have seen only frenzy and destructiveness is to restore the foundations of our hopes of a fuller democracy. In conclusion, if the price seems high, it should be said that the journal is expensive to produce by reason of the careful documentation of all the articles and that the price will come down as the numbers of subscribers increase.

B. FARRINGTON.

## SHORTER NOTICE

*Marx and Science*, by J. D. Bernal, F.R.S. (56 pp. Lawrence & Wishart, 1952. *2s. 6d.*)

It was a happy idea to print this year's Marx Memorial Lecture, delivered under the auspices of Marx House, for what Professor Bernal had to say was worthy of permanent record. He took as his special theme what Marx did for science in his time and the results that Marx's work has had and will have. He does not, however, give details of Marx's studies in natural science, but devotes about half his lecture to the broad development of Marx's views, exemplified by many useful and little-known quotations from Marx's less accessible writings and paying special attention to Marx's study of the growing social significance of natural science. An interesting section here is devoted to Marx's estimate of the role of science in industry. The latter part of the booklet deals with the position of science today in the light of Marxism, a field in which Bernal is a foremost authority. Succinctly and trenchantly he contrasts the frustration and militarisation of science under imperialism with the achievements and potentialities of the new stage of science for the people that marks the socialist world.

C.P.D.

*Lukàcs and Socialist Realism*, by Jozsef Révai. (*38* pp. Fore Publications. *1s. 6d.*)

In this pamphlet Jozsef Révai sums up the literary controversy which has been going on in Hungary around the literary æsthetic theories of György Lukàcs. This 'literary (but not purely literary) dispute', Révai states, was put upon the agenda because the Hungarian Workers' Party recognised the dangers of confused ideas and especially of the illusion that the People's Democracy constituted a third road between capitalism and socialism. With compelling clarity Révai shows how a disguised belief in a third road has a harmful effect both on Lukàcs's criticism and on Hungarian creative writing; out of this belief arise literary theories which in fact deny that the Socialist revolution opens a higher stage in culture, and which are therefore hiding places of the enemy. The penetrating power with which Révai exposes and fights the consequences of errors in political thinking makes this pamphlet important not only for those familiar with Lukàcs's work.

Alick West.

Published by the Proprietors, The Trinity Trust. 134 Ballards Lane, London, N.3. and printed by Wembley News, Ltd. (T.U.), Wembley, Middlesex. Great Britain. Registered for transmission by Magazine Post to Canada, including Newfoundland.

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*London, April 7, 1952.*

'We have organised a series of classes on the Notes of the Month which have been very successful. We meet after work on Tuesday evenings, first circulating a list of questions on the article to be studied before the discussion. We have decided to make a drive to extend the sales and the classes and to get the Shop Stewards' committee interested. Could a member of the Editorial Board come and lead one of the classes? It would give a tremendous fillip to our drive.'—*'Shop Steward'*.

The day after this letter reached us I happened to meet a veteran Scot with a lifelong record of service to the trade union movement. He told me how, when he was a lad in the pit nearly 30 years ago, he and his fellow colliers used to seize on the copy of *L.M.* which they shared between them, climb up the coal tip of a summer evening after their shift, sit down to read and argue about it, thrashing out the way forward for the working class. In those days, too, the need of a change in policy was felt keenly in pit and factory.

## READERS' PORTRAIT

Why do we pick out these three letters from the many? Because at the same time they are both remarkable and typical. They are remarkable as being such clear-cut and splendid examples for others; they are typical because they give a true picture of our readers—the most active, thinking members of the labour and trade union movement. The vast majority of our readers could follow the simple, clear-cut examples we have quoted. You have not far to seek. For the active thinking members of the movement, who would welcome this Magazine of International Labour as an essential weapon, are everywhere; you will find them wherever you yourself are active.

No room for fund details this month, except that the total for April continues still too low at

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